



SUMMARY REPORT

THE UGANDA WATER AND ENVIRONMENT WEEK 2019

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) is holding its second Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) at the Water Resource Institute-Entebbe; it was officially opened by the Minister of Water and Environment Hon. Sam Cheptoris on Monday 18th March 2019 and is concluding today Friday 22nd, March 2019. The closing shall commemorate the annual International Environment Days of: World Forest Day, World Water Day and World Meteorological Day.

The Uganda Water and Environment Week (UWEWK) provides an opportunity for sector actors and other stakeholders to exchange knowledge and experiences; meet, dialogue and network; foster new thinking; and benchmark best practices within the sector while developing solutions to the most pressing water and environment related challenges facing the country. **This year's theme is: *Water and Environment, a strategic driver in attainment of Sustainable Development Goals 2030***; and seen to explore the central and critical role water and environment has towards the attainment of the SDGs and national objectives.

OUTCOMES FROM THE WEEK

The key outcomes from the five sub-themes of: Water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus; Water, environment and Society; Green growth; Blue economy and SDGs; and Financing Sustainable Development are as follows:

1. The Minister of State for Environment- Hon. Kitutu. K. Mary Goretti relayed a Presidential Directive issued at Kyankwanzi district from H.E. President Yoweri Museveni, "all Central Forest Reserves, Wetlands, Riverbanks and lake shores should be protected".
2. The Water and Environment sector was seen as pivotal in guaranteeing regional peace and security due to issues related to the trans-boundary nature of water resources and also internal security where societal demands of water and environment resources are critical for livelihood. If this key role is stifled; there is a high risk of society degenerating into chaos especially the youth who form the bulk of the population.
3. Behaviour change is seen as vital in ensuring citizen participation in the sustainable management of water and environment resources. For example, the issue of governance where office bearers are expected to implement various instruments (policy, legislation, strategy, plans etc.) already in place and secondly, individual responsibility where the single person becomes aware and acts upon irresponsible waste disposal and also involvement in recycling and reduction of resource usage etc.
4. Well-articulated and targeted messages should be disseminated to various segments of society but also continued engagement by different government entities accounting for their actions towards water and environment resources.
5. Valuing Uganda's natural resource by expanding the parameters used in valuing the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to include natural capital accounting where by Uganda's natural assets are also added onto the balance sheet.

6. Restoration of natural resources should be concerted and deliberate to restore the country's forests landscapes, wetlands, riverbanks and improve these ecosystems with secondary benefits of improving water resources.
7. Although Uganda's performance on SDGs was recognised as highly impressive, it was also noted that there is unbalanced performance between the different SDGs. It was therefore recommended that there should be improved monitoring and tracking.
8. Uganda should invest research and development for business, science, technology and innovation to tap into the vast potential in natural resources and adapt to the changing environment. For example, explore the full potential of Ugandan lakes and rivers for marine transport, tourism etc.
9. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development needs to respond to the changing financing landscape where there is a reduction in grants but and an increase in loans. The opportunity is that the volume of loans shall increase but there is need to set proper mechanisms that address repayments and interest rates related with these mechanisms.
10. The country needs to prepare and tap into the green financing mechanisms by establishing regulations and institutional modalities to be competitive enough in accessing these financing options.
11. There is need to lower the water tariffs especially at National Water and Sewerage Corporation and encourage utilities to focus on water source protection that eventually lowers their cost of production because of improved water quality resulting from protecting the catchment.
12. The nexus thinking needs to be applied in the prioritisation of development interventions and resource allocation.
13. Members of Parliament should take responsibility in ensuring that budgetary allocations are in alignment with national development priorities especially their dependency on natural assets.
14. Take stock of the state of water resources, top and underground, blue and green in the country. Make this information readily available and publically known to all stakeholders as a measure of strategic planning by the various actors/sectors whose core transformation is dependent on water.
15. Ideological and strategic conversation on the nexus between water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus should be fostered with urgent attention. A task force to foster planning and strategic direction of this nexus requires to be established.
16. Further and strengthen inter-institutional collaboration between MWE and MAAIF to improve delivery of water for production services, attract strategic investments and leverage on optimum use of resources (human, financial and technical), the development of the national irrigation master plan should be expedited.

UWEWK 2019

Secretariat

The Water Resources Institute

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